



News Release

Rhode Island District Office

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Public Forum Set for Small Business Owners to Comment About Excessive Federal Regulatory Enforcement

PROVIDENCE, RI – Small business owners, community leaders and representatives of trade associations concerned about excessive enforcement of federal rules can voice their complaints at a U.S. Small Business Administration Regulatory Fairness Board Forum in Providence, R.I. on **Tuesday, May 1, 2007 from 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

The forum will be held at the **Rhode Island Convention Center, Room 558, 1 Sabin Street, Providence, R.I.**

Members of the SBA's Region I Regulatory Fairness Board and representatives of federal regulatory agencies will hear comments and complaints about regulatory enforcement and compliance.

"One of the biggest concerns small business owners face is unfair enforcement of federal regulations. They also worry about telling their stories because they fear retaliation by federal agencies," SBA National Ombudsman Nicholas Owens said. "Small business owners want to play by the rules and comply with federal regulations," he added, "and we want to encourage federal regulators to assist business owners with compliance rather than go straight to the penalty stage."

This forum offers small business owners a chance to express their concerns about federal compliance practices.

Comments and complaints presented during the forum will be directed to the appropriate federal regulatory agency. This information will also be shared with federal officials in the Ombudsman's annual report to Congress, and with managers of federal regulatory agencies to assist them with their enforcement actions.

The National Ombudsman's authority to respond to comments on compliance issues is limited to federal regulatory enforcement matters and does not include concerns about obtaining federal contracts, regulations in general, or securing guaranteed loans.

The forum is open to the public. Those wishing to testify should contact Norm Deragon at (401) 528-4561 Ext. 4576 or by email at normand.deragon@sba.gov before the forum. Should a small business owner or representative be unable to attend, written testimony may be sent in advance of the forum to be included in the public record.

Comments and concerns about federal enforcement actions can be addressed directly to SBA's Office of the National Ombudsman at 1-888-734-3247 (REGFAIR). For more information about the National Ombudsman and this forum, you may visit the National Ombudsman's Web site at www.sba.gov/ombudsman.

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